"It is Finished"

- Please open your Bibles to the **Gospel of John, chapter 19 and verse 16**.
- I want to start our reading in the **second half of verse 16**. In the second usage of the word "**THEN**."
- **READ John 19:16b – 30**
- **PRAYER**
- In John 19, we have the **Apostle John's account of the death** of the Lord Jesus Christ and some **solemn, sobering, and challenging words**!
- We know that it was out of **envy, jealousy, and pure hatred** that the enemies of Christ **achieved their ultimate goal**.
- Most of the religious leaders, working with the Roman civil authorities, **wanted Jesus dead,** and **they were determined to let nothing stand in their way**!
- And they **succeeded** in their efforts!
- Yet, we can be confident that in these words of Jesus on the cross, "**It is Finished**" (found in verse 30), **much more took place than the accomplishment of the evil plans of men**!
- **We can say this because we know at any time, Jesus, the eternal Son of God, had the power and authority to prevent men from putting him to death**.
- **Jesus said as much**!
- Perhaps you remember, **after the last supper** on **the night he was betrayed by Judas and captured, the Scripture informs us that** one of the followers of Jesus **wanted to fight to protect Him and took out a sword to do just that!**
- **Do you remember what Jesus said**? Matthew's Gospel tells us.
- Jesus said, **"Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and He will send me more than twelve legions of angels at once**." Matthew 26:53
- Earlier in John's Gospel, Jesus said these words,

- "This is why the Father loves me; **I lay down my life** so I may take it up again. **No one takes it from me**, but I lay it down alone. **I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up** again. I have received this command from my father." John 10:17,18

- Make no mistake! **It was NOT a lack of power; it was not a lack of ability to escape that caused Jesus to be arrested and crucified**.

- **It was His will and His purpose** to allow these things to happen**! It was His will to let His human sufferings to begin! It was His will to suffer the horrible death of crucifixion!**

- **At all times, the Lord Jesus was in complete sovereign control!**

- So, we need to **consider an important question this morning**—a question that is very important **to everyone in this room**!

- **The question is simply this**.

- **What did Jesus mean when he cried out, "It is finished," in his great agony and pain in his dying moments?**

- The gospel writer Mark says ("**Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last**.") Mark 15:37

- What did Jesus mean when He said, **"It is finished**?"

- **What does "IT" mean in Jesus' cry from the cross**? (Verse 30) **There is no subject for IT!!!**

ACCORDING TO A PLAN

- First, **we can never exhaust the whole meaning** of Jesus' words on the cross.

- However, the **words** "It is finished" from the cross indicate **that everything Jesus did for the benefit of our souls was according to a very definite plan**!

- There was a plan in place! It was a plan developed long before creation itself! A plan between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

- When I read our passage, did you notice **the repetitive language the Apostle John uses?**

- Notice **verses 24, 28, 36, even 37. READ** them.

- This makes it very clear that the **actions surrounding the death of Jesus were not by chance! They were NOT by accident**!

- **John wants us to see that** everything was **according to the Bible**. It is the **fulfillment of God's plan**. All these **events, small or significant, were "to fulfill the Scriptures.**"

- They were done to fulfill **The Word of God**!

- The Apostle Paul, writing a letter to the church at Corinth in modern-day southern Greece, wrote these words, **teaching us that the death of Jesus Christ was according to plan.** He wrote.

- "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance**: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures**." I Cor. 15:3

- There is that phrase again! "**According to the Scriptures**" or **to fulfill the Scripture**!

- **God kept His promise that Christ, the eternal Son, would suffer and die for sinners like you and me!**

- The Apostle Peter, **preaching on the day of Pentecost,** said these words. Notice **what he says about Jesus' death**. Acts 2:23

- "Fellow Israelites, listen to these words: This Jesus of Nazareth was a man attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did among you through him, just as you know. **23 Though he was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge**, you used lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him.

- Before there was even time as we know it, **the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit** had a particular **plan to save sinners**.

- **That friend is Good News**!

- **Even in Jesus's birth announcement**, the **purpose or plan for His coming was made known from the beginning**.

- **Speaking of the Virgin Mary, Scripture says:**

"**She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus (WHY?), for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had**

spoken by the prophet. 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us)." Matt 1:21-22

- Even the meaning of **"Jesus" was a declaration of what He would do**!

- Matthew tells us what His name means: " **He will save his people from their sins.**"

- We could spend the entire morning discussing how Christ's coming and how life on earth was part of God's eternal plan. There is so much to say!

- Dozens, if not hundreds, of Old Testament references reveal that God planned everything out completely and sent a Savior at the right time **so that men, women, boys, and girls could receive forgiveness for their sins**.

- **S that we could be reconciled with God and find peace with Him!**

- **The Son of God entered this world so that we could restore our relationship with the Creator and receive the gift of eternal life**.

- **These blessings are found only in the sacrificial death of Christ**.

- Philip read this verse earlier. It was hundreds of years before Jesus came into the world when Isaiah wrote:

"He was pierced **for our transgressions**; he was crushed **for our iniquities,**
The punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds, we are healed.
6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray; each of us has turned to our own way; and the **Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all**." Isaiah 53:5,6

- The **gospel writer Mark** also reveals the plan and purpose for Jesus coming into the world.

- He writes: "**For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**" Mark 10:45

- I hope you can understand why we say with **absolute conviction and certainty that the "it" in "It is Finished**" **was according to God's eternal and perfect plan**!

AN ACCOMPLISHED PLAN

- **Secondly,** not only does the word **"It,"" teach us t**hat Jesus died **according to God's eternal plan**.

- **"It" teaches us that God's plan to save sinners through Jesus' sacrificial death was entirely and 100% accomplished!**

- Jesus, speaking in prayer to His Father, said in John chapter 17, "**I have completed the work you gave me to do**." John 17:4

- There will **NEVER be a need for another sacrifice** for sin! **The Lord Jesus Christ completed the work of paying the punishment for sin**!

- O**ver and over again, when we read the Old Testament, we see the repeated need for a sacrifice.** That may seem strange to us! All this blood from animals.

- It was, however, needed for the forgiveness of their sins!

- **God's people viewed this sacrifice as symbolic and an anticipation of the coming work of Christ**.

- **The effectiveness** of the entire Old Testament sacrificial system **rested on the promise of Christ's future sacrifice on the cross**.

- **They looked forward, or ahead, by faith in what was coming!**

- **By faith, you and I look back at what Christ accomplished by His death!**

- **That sacrifice would be the final sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin**.

- The writer of the letter to the Hebrews **echoes these words**. He writes: **Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those waiting for him**." Hebrews 9:28

- The Apostle Paul also writes, "**The death he (Christ) died, he died to sin once and for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God."** Romans 6:10

- You see, the **scripture writers are pretty straightforward**, **repeating over and over again**: the **death of Christ was a one-time sacrifice for sin**!

- **In the original language used by the Apostle John, "It is finished" is only one word! I mention that because John uses the word in what was known as the perfect tense.**

- **Why is that important**, and **why even mention it?**

- Simply because the Greek language used in the New Testament, the **perfect tense** describes **an action that was fully completed but (and this is so important)** has **ongoing effects**.

- Why should this be such good news to us this morning?

- Because the results or benefits (if you would) of His sacrificial death **continue to this day** to **all who, by faith, will trust in Christ**!

- Because **Jesus fully completed his work**, **the ongoing effects are that you and I are offered the gift of eternal life**.

- The **perfect justice of God has been met!**

- **We are the lawbreakers, but** Jesus Christ's person and work have paid the "fine" in full.

- **Christ's work—not our actions—provides all we need to have a relationship with God.**

- There is a **beautiful refrain** in the Christian hymn **Jesus Paid it All**. Perhaps you know it?

- **"It goes, Jesus paid it all to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow**."

- **Our sins are like red stains** that we cannot wash out. Only the blood of Christ can cleanse us.

- Nothing **speaks louder about God's love** than that Jesus Christ died for sinners **like us.**

- Nothing **speaks louder of sin's destructive nature than Christ's cross**!

- I read something this past week that reminds us of the self-destructive nature of sin and how powerless we are on our own without Christ.

- The author wrote that our sin's **all-consuming nature is like a specific technique** used by Eskimos to kill wolves. I know that sounds strange, but listen.

- **READ ESKIMOS – you can find the illustration at the following link:**

  https://christianexcavator.com/2012/02/19/how-to-kill-a-wolf/

- What an accurate description! What will happen if we are unwilling to turn away from our sin and trust in Christ?

- Sin destroys us!

- God is telling us to **call out to Him and believe in Him**. He will do the rest of our lives!

- Sometimes, you see a guy holding up a sign that reads John 3:16 at a football game or other sporting event.

- That is great, but **I hope we never allow those words to become so familiar** that we **don't stop to reflect on what they mean and what had to happen**.

- **"For God so love the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life**."

- **That is love**!

- 1 John 4:10: "**Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins**."

- **Allow me please to ask. In your heart of hearts, do you know that love of God this morning**?

- **Do you know this salvation that God planned and accomplished**?

A VICTORIOUS PLAN

- Now, we should take one additional lesson from the words of Jesus on the cross: "**It is finished.**"

- We **have said "IT'** means that **#1 there is an eternal plan. #2 "IT" means the plan has been accomplished once and for all!**

- **Thirdly and lastly, we must say that "IT" means this is a victorious plan**! In other **words, this is a cry of triumph!**

- These words **are NOT the words of defeat**!

- **Jesus did not say, "I am finished," which would have meant he died defeated**. He **said, "IT is finished**."

- Please make no mistake about it. Scripture makes it clear. The physical suffering of Jesus was terrible! I think it's probably beyond our comprehension.

- Our sinless, spotless Savior, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, experienced that horrible death!

- **Strictly from a human perspective,** one can say **how** is that **victory**?

- **<u>Yet I say again, as firmly as possible, these words "It is Finished" are NOT words of defeat</u>**.

- **On the contrary, these are words of victory**!

- **In the first century, when Jesus lived when the purchase price was paid, and no further debts remained, the seller would write on the bill of sale the same Greek word Jesus cried from the cross: Tetelestai.**

- **It meant paid in full!**

- A famous 19th-century Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon, said, "**We can stand with confidence despite the thunder of the law and the lightning flash of justice, for we are safe beneath the cross. He paid the very last cent of the wages of our sin."**

- It is **NOT an understatement** to say that **with these words from the cross**, the **great purpose of God in the history of mankind was accomplished!**

- **On the cross, the <u>justice of God was fully satisfied</u> when our substitute (Jesus) paid the ultimate price needed for the forgiveness of sin.**

- This is our victory! The sins of the believer, ALL of them, past, present, and future, were transferred to the Savior.

- Remember Isaiah's words: "The LORD **has laid <u>on Him</u>** the iniquity of us all. Isa. 53:6.
- This means that if you are in Christ this morning, your sins are on Jesus, not yourselves. Even though our sinful nature still pushes us toward sin, if we are believers, we are legally accepted based on Jesus' merits.

- **If that is not a victory, I don't know what is!**

- In one commentary I read this week on this passage**, the author wrote:**

- **"Jesus died with the cry of the victor on His lips. This is not the moan of the defeated nor the sigh of patient resignation! It is the triumphant recognition that He has fully accomplished the work He came to do!"**

- **So, we can say with great confidence that this work <u>was done</u> <u>according to an eternal plan</u>, that it is a <u>finished and accomplished plan with ongoing effects</u>, and that it is <u>also a Victorious Plan</u>!**

- Why? Because the **death of Christ is life and peace for all who believe**!

- Listen to the Apostle Paul, writing to the church in Rome:

- READ Romans 5:6-11

  "**For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person, one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation**."

- **Dear friends, it all comes down to this!**

- **Do YOU know this victory in Christ?**

- All of us are weak! All of us are sinful! We must be made right (reconciled) with God and saved from the punishment that will come to all who reject Christ!

- **Do you know peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ because of His work on the cross**?

- I have heard it said, and I believe it is true, that "Before we can begin to see the cross as something done **<u>for us</u>**, we have to see it as something done **<u>by us.</u>**"

- I know we do not like to think this way, **but we must realize that it was you and I, <u>because of our guilt and sin</u>, <u>that placed Jesus on that horrible cross</u>**!

- **Yet <u>the death of Christ was and is a victorious plan!</u>**

- In His death, Jesus Christ bore the suffering, the guilt, and the disgrace so that **those who believe in Him could have Victory**!

- **Deliverance from sin that dominates our lives. Eternal life secure in Christ**!

- Oh yes, the Christian still sins! Sadly, that will never totally go away until we die. But if we sin, we have an **advocate** (**like our attorney in a court of law**. **A person who represents us**) before the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one.

- **I ask again, do you know this victory that is in Christ?**

- **Remember that Jesus' words, "It is finished," were #1 <u>according to an eternal plan</u>! It <u>was #2, a Completed and finished plan</u>, and #3, a <u>great, Victorious plan</u>**.

- If you do NOT know this victory in Christ, turn away from your sin, call upon the name of Jesus, and **believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved**!

- **God is making His appeal to you <u>through His word</u> this morning.**

- Writing to the church in the ancient Greek city of Corinth, the Apostle Paul wrote, "<u>We implore you (or beg you) on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God</u>." 2 Corinthians 5:22

- Suppose you are already in Christ Jesus. Press on, dear brother or sister, in your daily walk with Him! **<u>Rejoice, for it is finished</u>**!

- Prayer

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